

Winter/Spring, 2004

## Johne's

A Johne's Voluntary Herd Status Program is not new to BAI, however, new funding through the USDA has allowed states to either develop or enhance existing Johne's Surveillance programs. This has allowed the Bureau to hire a full-time coordinator, Dr. Tom Schomer, who will concentrate on developing and implementing a more comprehensive curriculum for veterinarians and producers, utilizing the National Johne's Working Group Handbook. Using herd risk assessment techniques, veterinarians will be surveying herd information, determining predisposing factors, and evaluating epidemiological history. The new coordinator hopes to reduce Johne's hazards by up to 85% in the state's bovine herds. The foremost goal is to assist producers in implementing best management practices that will inhibit introduction, improve health status and reduce present levels of Johne's in their herds.

In conjunction with the emphasis on Johne's, the BAI is collaborating with Dr. Dave Smith at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln on a USDA grant-funded project to execute a study that will determine the prevalence of Johne's in beef herds and how factors that can be controlled can increase its chances of occurrence. Producers statewide are being contacted to participate in this confidential study, as a means to support the collection of this data that is pertinent to the Nebraska beef industry.

To get more information on the state's Johne's activities, you can contact Dr. Tom Schomer at the BAI at (402) 471-6830 or [thomasjs@agr.state.ne.us](mailto:thomasjs@agr.state.ne.us).



## Scrapie Ram Project

The Scrapie Program is also moving ahead with a new grant-funded project, referred to as the Nebraska Ram Project. Acknowledging that breeding rams carrying the scrapie-resistant gene will increase scrapie resistance in Nebraska flocks, this project provides for ram testing to participating producers who are interested in knowing the genetics of their breeding rams. USDA funds are available for genetic testing of flock sires or replacement sires for individual flocks. The Nebraska Department of Agriculture and USDA Veterinary Services are supervising the project. Local veterinarians will draw the blood samples, with six rams per flock being approved for testing. BAI field staff will be distributing lab submission forms to veterinary clinics, or the forms can be requested from the office at 800-572-2437. The rams must have the USDA official scrapie ID tag and a plastic tag or tattoo and testing is being completed between the dates of January 1, 2004 and August 1, 2004.

BAI, with the assistance of the Nebraska Cooperative Extension, has planned meetings across the state to educate producers about scrapie, genetic resistance, and the Nebraska Ram Project. Nebraska sheep producers who would like to have their rams tested are asked to contact their local veterinarians to schedule an appointment. Veterinarians interested in more information on the Ram Project can access the BAI web site, contact the BAI office or contact Dr. Dane Henry at (308) 856-4697 or [danerh@mail.state.ne.us](mailto:danerh@mail.state.ne.us).

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## NDA - HHSS - *and YOU !*

The Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) is collaborating with Nebraska Health and Human Services (HHSS) on the development of the Nebraska Health Alert Network (HAN). The goal of the project is to deliver emergency or pertinent information to State professionals in the quickest way possible.

With this in mind, a composite contact database is being developed with the capability to send emergency, educational or informative data to the entire list quickly by either e-mail or fax. The project can be valuable to your practice, as information may be forwarded to you before public release. **You can assist us** by providing the necessary details. By December 12, we would like to have the Nebraska-accredited veterinarians' **e-mail addresses** and/or **fax numbers** and **type of practice** (i.e. large animal, companion animal, etc). The information would be utilized internally, strictly for dissemination of information on your behalf, and for heightened response activity statewide. Your assistance will help us greatly.

The requested information can be forwarded to:

Bureau of Animal Industry  
P.O. Box 94787  
Lincoln, NE 68509  
E-mail: tammyjz@agr.state.ne.us  
Fax: (402) 471-6893

## New Staff at Bureau

Dr. Tom Schomer has joined the staff at the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI). Dr. Schomer will be leading the Johne's Voluntary Herd Status Program for the agency.

Dr. Schomer received his degree in Veterinary Medicine from Iowa State University in 1969 and has practiced in Long Island, New York; Brookings, Oregon; and Lincoln, Nebraska. He also earned a degree in Law from the University of Nebraska in 1996. He and his wife, Holly, have three children and are residing in Lincoln, Nebraska. His stated goal for the program is to "make



education and training available, enabling at least 90% of the large animal practitioners in Nebraska to become Johne's Certified Veterinarians within the next 24 months."

"I appreciate the opportunity to work toward controlling Johne's Disease in Nebraska. If the link between Johne's Disease in animals and Crohn's Disease in people is proven, it will be very important for the beef and dairy industries to have already taken steps to test and manage their herds. This will allow them to work towards the goal of minimizing the economic effects of mandatory Johne's Disease control programs that are sure to follow."

Also joining the Bureau is Joanne Komenda. Joanne has been with the Department of Agriculture for four years, starting in Farm Mediation and the Beginning Farmer programs in the agency. Within the Bureau, she will be working directly with the Nebraska Commercial Dog and Cat License program, the Nebraska Poultry Improvement Program, Brucellosis testing and vaccination records, and the day-to-day work of the office.



Joanne comes to BAI with training and experience in grant writing, fund-raising, and human services. She served as the Program Coordinator for the Nebraska Farm Mediation Service for fifteen years prior to joining the agency, and has also served two terms as a VISTA. For several years she was also responsible for the distribution of Farm Aid funds in the state and also consulted on the production of the highly-acclaimed PBS documentary, *The Farmer's Wife*. Currently, Joanne continues to assist with the annual Can-Care-A-Van food drive across the state.

Joanne and husband, Tony, who is a carpenter, and son, Jake, who is an electrician, live in rural Lancaster County.

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## Emergency Management

Homeland Security activities are moving forward with the recent completion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Livestock Emergency Disease Response System (LEDRS) Veterinary and Extension Educator Seminar. High attendance was a good reflection of the commitment and dedication of responders willing to step forward in the event of a livestock emergency, natural or intentional. Emergency response plans are being developed where there were none, and plans among affected sectors are being merged to reflect where crossover assistance will be needed. Veterinarians who have an interest in the LEDRS program, but are not currently participating, should contact our office for information and an application.

Several opportunities have been made available for those interested in biosecurity development. The USDA, the University of Nebraska - Lincoln, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and other entities are providing training to enhance response procedures and encourage emergency management planning.

Various other projects have also been completed. State fairs, exhibitions, and industry meetings were sites where newly printed Biosecurity Signs were distributed for posting at production and livestock containment sites. They are available for the asking, and would be a great project for a 4-H club or high school FFA Chapter.



Final stages have been applied to the purchase of five, fully-stocked emergency trailers and additional livestock containment equipment with strategic placement in the state for immediate use in the event of a livestock emergency. Additional activities include the production of a training video addressing emergency livestock disposal; a one-day FAD diagnostic training for veterinarians; the creation of a comprehensive database for all animal disease reporting data; the purchase of hand-washers for the state fairgrounds livestock areas; advancement of Sentinel Veterinary Clinics; and local emergency response seminars scheduled statewide to encourage the development of local emergency response plans.

## Classical Swine Fever (Hog Cholera) Surveillance

The Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) and USDA Veterinary Services have received federal funding to conduct surveillance for Classical Swine Fever (CSF, also known as hog cholera) and have established an agreement with the University of Nebraska Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory to submit appropriate samples to the Foreign Animal Disease Laboratory on Plum Island for testing.

Nebraska veterinarians are invited to participate in the surveillance project by submitting swine or tissue from swine exhibiting symptoms consistent with CSF. Primary screening criteria for sample submissions include generalized hemorrhages in the tissues post mortem, history of high mortality and sudden death, and persistent high fever. Secondary criteria are blue to purple skin discolorations, generalized lymph node enlargement, CNS symptoms, and swine experiencing continued disease problems without a conclusive diagnosis.

Veterinarians submitting samples suitable for submission to Plum Island will be paid \$50 for each sample submitted. Tissue to be submitted must include fresh or frozen tonsil, lymph nodes, spleen, kidney, and the last few inches of small intestine.

If you have any questions regarding CSF or the surveillance project, please contact the field veterinarian in your area or call the BAI, the VS office, or the UNL Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory.

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## Tuberculosis (TB) Import Order Changes

Nebraska has implemented a more restricted movement order for the states of California, Texas, and New Mexico due to their changes in TB status this past year.

Because immediate concerns have subsided, a change to the order was made updating some of the individual identification requirements.

All cattle coming from these states for feeding or breeding still require a permit number from the BAI and a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI). ID is required on breeding stock over 12 months of age or dairy cattle being shipped at any age for any purpose, other than slaughter.

Beef cattle, bison, and dairy cattle moving directly to slaughter within Nebraska from a TB-Modified Accredited Advanced state or zone are not subject to special import requirements.

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## Commercial Dog and Cat Program 🐾🐾🐾🐾🐾🐾🐾🐾🐾

**License numbers continue to rise**, due to new legislation increasing the 'types' of facilities that would require a Commercial Dog and Cat Facility License.

As of September 30, 2003, a total of 430 commercial breeders, boarding kennels, and dealers are currently licensed in Nebraska. These numbers continue to increase over the last year, with the south central area of Nebraska showing the largest increase in licensed commercial breeders.

On October 1, 2003, Legislative Bill 233 (LB 233) went into effect. This requires that all animal control facilities be State licensed. An animal control facility is defined as any facility operated by the State or any political subdivision of the state for the purpose of impounding or harboring seized, homeless, abandoned, or unwanted animals. Also, all animal shelters are required to have a State license. Animal shelter means a facility used to house or contain dogs and/or cats and owned, operated or maintained by an incorporated humane society, animal welfare society, society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, or any other nonprofit organization devoted to the welfare, protection, and humane treatment of such animals. The licensing period for this phase of the program is nearing completion, and as of October 15, 2003, a total of 80 animal control facilities and animal shelters have been state licensed.

Beginning January 1, 2004, Legislative Bill 274 (LB 274) goes into effect. This requires that all pet shops be State licensed. A pet shop is defined as any retail establishment whose primary function is to sell companion animals and related supplies and where such animals are bought, sold, exchanged, given away, raffled, or offered for raffle or retail sale to the general public. Applications for licenses will be sent to all pet shops in Nebraska in November.

Fees were also increased to \$150 for all licenses. As the number of State-licensed facilities has increased, so has the number of complaints and inspection of facilities. Veterinary clinics remain exempt from licensing.

For inquiries, or to file a complaint, please contact Rick Herchenbach at (402) 563-1875 or (402) 471-6832.

## Rabies Cases

Nebraska Health and Human Services has reported that the rabies cases continue to rise in the state. To date, 98 positive animal cases have been confirmed in the following designated counties: Buffalo, Butler, Clay, Dakota, Dawes, Fillmore, Franklin, Gage, Greeley, Hall, Hamilton, Jefferson, Knox, Lancaster, Lincoln, Merrick, Otoe, Pawnee, Platte, Saline, Seward, Thayer, Webster, and York. Animals found positive include bats, cats, cows, dogs, fox, goat, horses, and skunks.

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## West Nile Virus

The reports of West Nile Virus in horses has declined, although the number of positive cases in humans is on the rise. Without having specific details to base the lower number of horse cases, the BAI suspects that equine vaccinations, acquired immunity buildup, and under reporting may have all lead to the lower number.

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## National ID System Being Developed

An animal identification plan is being developed as part of the national



initiative to protect U.S. livestock. Phase One of the plan, Premises ID, hopes to be in place by 2004. This phase would require that standardized premises identification numbers be established for all production operations, markets, assembly points, exhibition, and processing plants.

Once the Premises ID systems are in place, the plan is to proceed to Phase Two, which calls for individual identification for cattle in commerce. The goal is to have Phase Two in place by the beginning of 2006.



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## News From Other States

### California:

To assist in regaining the TB Free Status, California has implemented the following TB requirements for cattle entering their state, as of August 2003:

- All dairy breeding cattle over six months of age must be TB tested within 60 days prior to entry into California. Exceptions:
  1. California cattle returning to the state;
  2. Individually identified cattle going directly to officially inspected slaughter facilities; and
  3. Cattle from TB Accredited Free herds.
- All cattle originating from Michigan must be from an Accredited-Free herd, or have a negative whole herd TB test within the last 12 months; and have a negative individual TB test within 60 days prior to entry. All cattle will be quarantined and retested 61 to 120 days after the last test upon entry into California. Bison, goats, and cervids originating from Michigan have additional requirements.

### Illinois:

- Of the 4,702 animals tested for Johne's during the year, 15.4% of the animals tested positive. Ten herds are operating under a cooperative vaccination agreement. Certificates of Vaccination have been filed for 325 calves.

### Iowa:

- Iowa was granted Stage IV status in the pseudorabies program in April 2003; PRV vaccination for imports into Iowa is no longer mandatory, and the surveillance testing for movement is no longer required.
- Import requirements for cervids into Iowa have been modified. It is recommended that veterinarians contact Iowa before importing any cervids for the requirements.

### Kansas:

- TB restrictions for **Beef Cattle** from California, Texas and New Mexico plus the quarantined area of Michigan, and **Dairy Cattle** from any state:
  1. All cattle, intended for breeding and/or milking purposes, six months of age and

older, will be required to have a negative TB test within 60 days prior to entry into Kansas or/ to come from a herd that is accredited TB "free;"

2. Colorado has an ongoing TB testing program in their dairies. Colorado dairy cattle, if they are current on the routine TB testing, can be imported as if they are from an accredited herd;
3. Cull cows coming to a feedlot to be slaughtered, without change of ownership, will not need to be tested;
4. Feeder cattle and calves will not be required to have a negative test.

### Minnesota:

- Minnesota has been granted pseudorabies Stage V status.
- Over 600 herds are enrolled in the Minnesota Johne's Disease control program.

### Missouri

- Missouri has applied for Brucellosis-free status as they have gone over a year without an infected animal.
- Certified 250 veterinarians to complete Herd Risk Assessments for Johne's.

### North Dakota:

- Currently has 70 producers enrolled in a Johne's Disease Plan.
- A Veterinary Reserve Corp training is scheduled for January.

### Ohio:

- CWD and TB statistical sampling will begin in Ohio's free-ranging deer herd.
- There are plans to review existing, and write new, Johne's herd plans for herds with positive cultures.

### South Dakota:

- A second case of Anthrax was reported in September on a cattle ranch in Tripp County, South Dakota. The case involved an unvaccinated group of approximately 70 cow /calf pairs with a

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loss of 10 cows. The cattle affected were being pastured approximately 10 miles northwest of Witten in south central South Dakota, near the Nebraska border;

- Both Johne's lab submissions and Johne's Herd Certification showed a substantial increase.

## Wisconsin:

- Wisconsin has reported three CWD-infected farms in the state. One of the herds was depopulated in 2002. Another herd, discovered in 2003 started with a positive imported elk from Minnesota. The other 193 elk in the herd were killed and tested negative. And the third positive farm is contesting the condemnation order;
- For the Wisconsin CWD Monitoring Program, a TB test, individual identification and a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection are required for inter and intrastate movement.

*This newsletter is available in other formats for persons with disabilities upon request. For an alternate format or for additional information on topics in this publication, please call the Nebraska Department of Agriculture at (402) 471-2341.*

*TDD users can contact the Department by first calling the Nebraska Relay System. Telephone (800) 833-7352 and asking the operator to call (402) 471-2341.*

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*Merlyn Carlson, Director  
Larry L. Williams, DVM, State Veterinarian*

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